

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A computer based method for managing the cost of a lawsuit comprising the steps of:
  - 5 a) Selecting process maps of the tasks to be done in the lawsuit;
  - b) setting pricing variables for each task to be done;
  - c) establishing a lawsuit budget;
  - d) providing a case status module with real time information on how the lawsuit is proceeding;
  - 10 e) providing a point and click billing module for automatically sending invoices to corporate counsel; and
  - f) providing an exceptions module to allow for automatic approval or denial of new work to be done that is beyond the budget.
- 15 2. The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of providing statistical reporting, whereby data is stored and statistical information is generated using the data.
3. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of selecting process maps includes selecting each anticipated aspect of the lawsuit and using the process maps that are in the system.
- 20 4. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of creating process maps includes identifying each task to be performed in the lawsuit and who will be doing each task.
5. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of setting price variables includes establishing limits for each task to be performed.
- 25 6. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of setting price variable includes inputting upper and lower control limits for each task.
7. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of setting price variables includes inputting into a data base firm location, type of case, and type of lawyer.

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8. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of establishing a budget includes generating values for each task, a client electronically submitting the budget to a firm, and the firm either accepting or rejecting the budget by a submission back to the client.

5 9. The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the step of rejecting the budget includes allowing a firm to generate a counterproposal budget and electronically submit same to the client.

10 10. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of providing a case status module includes providing a client with current information on status of a particular lawsuit by transmission of such information over the internet.

11. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of providing a point and click billing module includes inputting the work that has been completed into a computer by clicking an ABA code representative of the work area completed, clicking on the specific task performed, clicking on a tab to bill it, and automatically  
15 sending a bill via internet to a client.

12. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of providing a point and click billing module includes electronically sending a bill to a customer, and the customer electronically or manually causing payment to a firm.

13. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of providing a  
20 point and click billing module includes allowing a firm to electronically bill a customer once a task is performed.

14. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of providing an exceptions module includes allowing a firm to electronically submit requests for approval of new work that is not in a budget, and allowing a client to approve, modify  
25 or reject the request.

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15. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of providing an exceptions module includes outside counsel submitting a quote for new work, and the system approving the quote if it is within a previously set default pricing variable.

16. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of providing an exceptions module includes allowing a client to obtain current status of prior exceptions requests.

17. The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the step of providing statistical reporting includes graphically outputting historical information based on data that is generated by the system.

18. The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of providing incentives for exceptional performance by a firm, electronically notifying a firm of the exceptional performance, and compensating the firm.

19. A computer based litigation cost management system comprising:  
a module operable for inputting data for establishing a budget, said module including a feature for inputting values to each task, and a feature for inputting the expertise to be used on each task;  
a module for statistically reporting each task to verify if it is in control;  
and,  
an exceptions module for accommodating alterations to the budget.

20. The computer based cost management system as claimed in claim 19, further comprising a module for electronically billing a client and receiving automatic approval and payment.

21. A litigation cost management system comprising:  
a module that maps out the process of litigation;  
a module for assigning values to each part of the process;  
a module for inputting the rates to be charged by each counsel; and  
a module for inputting other information.

22. A cost management system comprising:  
a real time analysis module;  
a real time budget and cost to complete module;

an alert module operable to inform someone when the case goes over budget; and

an exception module operable to permit updating of the budget.

23. A point and click litigation cost management system comprising:

5 an input module for entering work that has been completed by a firm and generating an invoice;  
a transfer device for communicating the invoice to a customer;  
a processing department operated by the customer that is operable to receive the invoice from the transfer device;  
10 a means for transmitting payment information to the firm.

24. The cost management system as claimed in claim 23, further comprising a means for providing exceptions to the budget through electronic submission by outside counsel to in-house counsel.

25. The cost management system as claimed in claim 24, further  
15 comprising a module for tracking each exception that is requested, so as to make decisions based on a litigation process that is consistent for all outside law firms.

26. A system of a law firm and corporate counsel managing the cost of litigation for a case comprising:

20 the corporate counsel generating a budget based on defaults and price variables;  
the budget being electronically submitted to a law firm;  
the budget being approved, rejected or modified by the law firm;  
the case proceeding based upon an agreed upon budget; and  
25 the law firm electronically requesting exceptions when a task is outside of the agreed upon budget.